

1.0 Conference Summary and Agenda

Conference on Updating the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan

July 31 – August 1, 2000

New Orleans Marriott

This document summarizes the initial public effort by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) to update its existing transportation plan, the 1996 *Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan (SITP)*. The update is part of the Department's promise to its stakeholders to maintain a current, viable transportation plan that helps guide the investment of public resources in Louisiana.

In the summer of 2000, the LDOTD and a consultant team led by Wilbur Smith Associates embarked together on the large task of updating the transportation plan. It must be established up front that the Department's existing *SITP* is a prototype document partially financed by a special USDOT grant in 1993. The resulting plan has been used as a model for other states to replicate. It is multimodal in its approach, establishes measurable goals, defines actions to achieve those goals, and embraces the public involvement premise advanced by federal legislation. In short, the existing plan is excellent and has more than served its purpose.

As time passes, however, conditions change and even far-reaching, innovative planning documents must be updated. The Congress passed TEA-21, placing more emphasis on accommodating freight movements and using technology to make the transportation system more efficient. The link between a state's economy and good transportation has been firmly established, and Louisiana wants to use transportation to improve the quality of life for its citizens. Federal funding was increased through TEA-21, but Louisiana wants to be assured that its level of infrastructure investment is sufficient to implement the goals set forth in the *SITP* and *Louisiana: Vision 2020*, a 20-year economic development strategic plan.

Building upon the successful public involvement process implemented in developing the *SITP*, the LDOTD held a conference in New Orleans to begin the update process. The purpose of the conference was for the LDOTD to give stakeholders an update/status report and to give the LDOTD staff an opportunity to listen to its customers. The Department wants input on major transportation issues facing Louisiana over the next 30 years, including how to use public investment to reshape the economy and improve the state's quality of life.

The conference was attended by more than 175 persons representing each transportation mode, state and local governments, educators, officials, state agencies, shippers, operators, the business community, and other interest groups. The LDOTD arranged for presentations/comments from a group of speakers that provided a sound basis for discussing the future of transportation in Louisiana:

- Kevin E. Cunningham, Assistant Chief of Staff to the Governor

- Mark S. Smith, Deputy Secretary, Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
- Harold Price, Assistant Secretary, Office of Commerce and Industry, Louisiana Department of Economic Development
- William A. Sussman, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration
- James J. Murphy, Ports & Environmental Officer, US Maritime Administration
- Eric Kalivoda, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Planning & Programming, LDOTD
- Michael R. Conwell, Senior VP, Hibernia Bank
- Arno Hart, Senior Economist, Wilbur Smith Associates
- Ron Brinson, President & CEO, Port of New Orleans
- Major Mark Oxley, Louisiana State Police
- Dale A. Janik, Project Director, Wilbur Smith Associates

The audience listened respectfully to the viewpoints of the speakers and enthusiastically weighed in on how, where, why and by how much the DOTD could improve transportation. Dr. Kam K. Movassaghi, Secretary of the DOTD, was a major player in the conference. He presided over the conference, delivered his personal comments on the state of transportation in Louisiana, attended breakout sessions, and made himself available to answer questions offered during the conference. His personal commitment to this update process was evident throughout. On behalf of the Department, Dr. Movassaghi sees this plan update as an opportunity to take advantage of the many economic opportunities offered by the global market and tourism so Louisiana's citizens can be the beneficiaries of sound government decisions.

The consultant team and DOTD staff also facilitated six breakout sessions that allowed a more focused evaluation and specialized exchange of ideas. Each breakout session is summarized in Section 3.0 of this document by the breakout facilitators:

- Air Transportation – Pamela Keidel, Wilbur Smith Associates, and Phil Brodt, GCR, Inc.
- Freight Railroad – Tim Joder, UNO College of Urban and Public Affairs
- Ports & Waterways – Anatoly Hochstein and Jay Jayawardana, LSU National Ports & Waterways Institute
- Regional Planning Officials – Butch Babineaux, Wilbur Smith Associates, and Bob Schmidt, HNTB
- Surface Intercity Passenger – James Amdal, UNO College of Urban and Public Affairs, and Mike Heath, Alliance Transportation Group
- Trucking – Arno Hart, Wilbur Smith Associates, and Chris Demopolos, DFA

As Project Director for the update of Louisiana's Transportation Plan, I found it very interesting to hear the very profound perspectives offered by the conference attendees, invited speakers, transportation and economic specialists, and others. The consultant team and DOTD now have a great deal of "food for thought" as we begin the process. Among the important points made and issues raised were the following (in no particular order):

- The new plan must address bicycle transportation as a mode
- The TIME-D program is fully funded
- Half the 48 elements from the 1996 *SITP* are considered implemented
- The DOTD maintains a larger than average share of the public highway network
- Plan should consider impact fees on real estate development to mitigate traffic impacts
- There is a need to identify innovative, new funding sources for large, expensive projects
- Houma has inferior access relative to the other metropolitan areas
- The role of the Advisory Council is significant in capital improvements
- The plan must identify performance measures/criteria to measure our success
- Many want to know how Louisiana compares to "peer" states
- Unless the state takes advantage of its position, it could be "doomed to mediocrity"
- Benefits and costs (economics) must play a role in establishing priorities
- Louisiana must continue to recognize environmental concerns
- Should consider establishing a statewide Surface Transportation Authority to oversee public transit
- The stakeholders must be involved at the beginning
- Access = mobility
- Improvements to the rail system could be publicly financed
- A decision must be made soon on the proposed new regional airport
- Safety is a huge issue in Louisiana – state ranks very low
- The DED sees development of high priority corridors (I-10, I-49 North, I-49 South, I-69) as important
- State is working to establish passenger airline service to Latin America from New Orleans
- Louisiana is a Top 10 tourist destination worldwide

- Tourism is the state's second largest industry (behind health care)
- The Scenic Byways program could be expanded to benefit tourism
- Interstate Welcome Centers have security and maintenance problems
- The Plan must be widely supported, not just be the DOTD's Plan
- Department's project selection process is not well understood
- Latin American trade offers significant opportunities for Louisiana
- ITS activities should be concentrated on I-10, the "technology corridor"
- Large unfunded needs for important highways – I-49, I-69, US 90, US 165
- The 1996 *SITP* was ranked 1st by the FHWA in Outreach
- Louisiana must look beyond its borders to understand how transportation helps the economy
- The Plan should take a close look at intermodal connectors
- *Vision 2020* is an economic strategic plan that has many transportation elements
- *The Latin America Trade & Transportation Study* concluded that Louisiana has the highest port needs (dollars) of all the Alliance members
- State highway system designations (Statewide vs. Regional, functional classification types, jurisdiction) are not widely understood
- Access management policy is needed to control development and mitigate congestion
- The Millennium Port decision is key to continuing the state's role in trade
- Transportation investments/plans must be coordinated with local land use plans
- MPOs do not routinely consider rail in their plans
- State financing of rail capital improvements should be considered
- 1996 *SITP* overlooked off-shore oil/gas exploration
- Rail/highway connectors are in poor condition
- There are options beyond the *megaload facility* option for the Millennium Port
- The ports could help mitigate congestion by extending their hours of operation
- Louisiana should move to establish an alliance with Midwestern states to lengthen Mississippi River locks to 1200 feet to avoid losing traffic to the West Coast
- Inland channels should be deepened to 12 feet
- Evaluation criteria for highway investments must be established

- Financing options should examine innovative sources, including truck fees, local option taxes, tolls, state infrastructure banks, TIFIA
- Statewide access management policy is needed
- Plan should make the public aware of the benefits of smart growth policies and sustainability
- Project cost escalation is a problem for the DOTD – threatens fiscal constraint of the STIP
- DOTD must carry its message to the Legislature – education is needed
- There is a need for more inclusion of all modes in the Plan
- Progressive initiatives (smart growth, home rule, access plan) should be adopted
- Freight is under-represented in the existing Plan
- Funding is largely incomplete in the existing Plan
- Air quality problems have the potential to restrict economic progress
- Take steps to involve the under-served citizens (environmental justice)
- Transit should focus on moving people, not vehicles
- Large groups of citizens are under-educated on transportation issues
- DOTD must reach the legislators

While this list is hardly all-inclusive, it shows the wide range of issues and concerns involving transportation in Louisiana. A coordinated approach to planning, in concert with a continuation of the state's strong public involvement program, will help address many of the issues mentioned above. We look forward to the challenge of assisting Louisiana's citizens and state government move forward.

Dale A. Janik, Project Director
Wilbur Smith Associates

Sunday, July 30

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Early Registration

Monday, July 31

7:00 am - 8:30 am Registration - 2nd Floor Exhibit Hall Registration Booth
Continental Breakfast - 2nd Floor La Galleries 1-3

General Session 2nd Floor La Galleries 1-3

8:30 am Call to Order - Dr. Kam K. Movassaghi, Secretary,
LA Department of Transportation and Development

8:35 am - 8:45 am Welcome & Comments by Kevin E. Cunningham,
Assistant Chief of Staff to the Governor

8:45 am - 9:00 am Comments by Dr. Kam Movassaghi,
Secretary, LA DOTD

9:00 am - 10:00 am Comments/Presentations by:
• Mark S. Smith, Deputy Secretary, LA Department of Culture,
Recreation, and Tourism
• Harold Price, Assistant Secretary, Office of Commerce &
Industry, LA Department of Economic Development
• William A. Sussman, Division Administrator, Federal Highway
Administration
• James J. Murphy, Ports and Environmental Officer, U.S.
Maritime Administration

10:00 am - 10:15 am BREAK

10:15 am - 11:00 am "1996 Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan"
Dale Janik - Wilbur Smith Associates
Eric Kalivoda - LA DOTD

11:00 am - 11:30 am "Louisiana: Vision 2020"
Michael R. Conwell - Senior Vice President & Manager,
International Banking, Hibernia Bank

11:30 am - 12:30 pm "Latin America Trade and Transportation Study"
Arno Hart - Wilbur Smith Associates

12:30 pm - 2:00 pm LUNCH - La Galleries 4-6
"Millennium Port"
J. Ron Brinson, President & C.E.O., Port of New Orleans

2:00 pm - 2:30 pm "Transportation Safety"
Major Mark Oxley, LA State Police

2:30 pm - 2:45 pm	General Instructions for Breakout Sessions Dale Janik - Wilbur Smith Associates Eric Kalivoda - LA DOTD
2:45 pm - 3:00 pm	BREAK
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Breakout Sessions 1. Air Transportation - 4th Floor Meeting Room I 2. Freight Railroad - 4th Floor Meeting Room K 3. Ports & Waterways - 4th Floor Meeting Room L 4. Regional Planning Officials - 2nd Floor La Galleries 1-3 5. Surface Intercity Passenger - 4th Floor Meeting Room M 6. Trucking - 4th Floor Meeting Room N Agenda for each: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of specific elements in current Plan• Identify the major transportation issues that should be addressed over the next 30 years

DINNER ON YOUR OWN

Tuesday, August 1

7:00 am - 8:00 am	Continental Breakfast - 2nd Floor La Galleries 1-3
8:00 am - 9:30 am	Breakout Sessions continued from Monday - same meeting rooms
9:30 am - 9:45 am	BREAK
9:45 am - 12:30 pm	Plenary Session - 2nd Floor La Galleries 1-3 A. "Report from Breakout Sessions" B. "General Issues /Questions" (opportunity for attendees to speak to the entire group about transportation issues and to ask questions) Conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates -assistance from LA DOTD
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm	LUNCH - La Galleries 4-6 Scope and schedule for the update of the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan Dale Janik - Wilbur Smith Associates
2:00 pm	ADJOURN